

Message Text

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ACTION OPIC-06

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 948
INFO USDOC WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 8569

STATE PLEASE PASS TO OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION,
INSURANCE DIVISION: ATTN: ELLA E. HAWKINS, APPLICATIONS
OFFICER, TEL: 202/632-1820

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, EINV, SY
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR OPIC -- JOHN J. MCMULLEN ASSOCIATES

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED YOUR MEMORANDUM OF NOV. 24, 1976,
CONCERNING REQUEST OF JOHN J. MCMULLEN ASSOCIATES
(295-77-163 SYRIA) FOR POLITICAL RISK INSURANCE IN
CONNECTION WITH ITS BID ON A SYRIAN GOVERNMENT TENDER
FOR A COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION STUDY OF SYRIA.
AS FAR AS WE KNOW THIS IS THE FIRST APPLICATION BY AN
AMERICAN FIRM FOR OPIC INSURANCE RELATED TO A SYRIAN
PROJECT SINCE US-SYRIAN OPIC AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED IN
DAMASCUS LAST AUGUST. WE ARE RESPONDING BY CABLE SINCE
TIME IS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN AWARDED THE TENDER
IN MCMULLEN IS INTERESTED.

2. ACCORDING TO THE NOVEMBER 10, 1976, LETTER OF
MCMULLEN VICE PRESIDENT, ATTACHED TO YOUR MEMORANDUM, YOU
HAVE IN HAND COPIES OF TWO EMBASSY DAMASCUS CABLES/
OUTLINING FOLLOW-ON ADVANTAGES WE THINK WILL ACCRUE
TO US FIRMS IN THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR IF A US FIRM GAINS
THE CONTRACT FOR THE SYRIAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY.
WE WILL ADD TO THE INFORMATION IN THOSE CABLES OUR
OPINION THAT SUCH A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY WILL BE OF
IMMENSE BENEFIT TO SYRIA IN ENABLING IT TO RATIONALIZE,
EXPAND, AND IMPROVE A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THE
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF WHICH DATE FROM OTTOMAN TIMES.
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SPECIFICALLY, SYRIA NEEDS TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE ITS

MEDITERRANEAN PORTS AND MORE EFFICIENTLY LINK THEM WITH THE POPULATION CENTERS IN THE INTERIOR OF THE COUNTRY, MODERNIZE AND RATIONALIZE ITS RAIL SYSTEM (WHICH TODAY CONSISTS OF TWO, UNCONNECTED RAIL NETWORKS OF DIFFERING GUAGES), EXPAND ITS HIGHWAYS (BASICALLY SYRIA HAS BUT ONE PAVED NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAY CONNECTING ITS MAIN CITIES AND ONE EAST-WEST LINK WHICH FOLLOWS THE EUPHRATES RIVER; VIRTUALLY ALL THESE ROUTES ARE TWO-LANE.), AND DEVELOP A TARIONAL INTERNAL SYSTEM OF AIR ROUTES AND SUPPORTING FACILITIES. SOME PROGRESS IS BEING MADE IN ALL THESE AREAS, BUT THE COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN WILL ENABLE SYRIA TO MORE EFFICIENTLY ALLOT ITS RESOURCES.

3. WE HOPE THAT MCMULLEN'S REQUEST FOR OPIC INSURANCE RECIEVES QUICK APPROVAL. TIME IS IMPORTANT IN AWARDDING THIS CONTRACT. THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT HAS ALREADY OPENED BIDS FROM THREE AMERICAN AND A NUMBER OF FOREIGN FIRMS. SYRIAN PRACTICE IS NORMALLY NOT TO AWARD A CONTRACT TO THE LOWEST BIDDER UPON THE FIRST OPENING OF BIDS, BUT TO REQUEST SEPARATE OFFERS FOR PRICE AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS. UPON OPENING THE OFFERS, THE SYRIAN TENDERING AGENCY WILL THEN RENEGOTIATE WITH EACH BIDDER IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT THE MOST ADVANTAGEOUS COMBINATION OF PRICE AND TECHNOLOGY. MCMULLEN'S BID WAS NOT CONSIDERED. BECAUSE IT WAS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY A BID BOND. THE MINISTRY HAS PUT MCMULLEN'S OFFER ON A "WAITING LIST", BUT MCMULLEN'S AGENT HERE THINKS IT WILL BE CONSIDERED IF THE BID BOND IS QUICKLY FORTHCOMING (THE AGENT IS INFORMING MCMULLEN OF THIS TODAY). WE INFER FROM MCMULLEN'S LETTERS THAT SUBMISSION OF THE BID BOND HINGES UPON SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION BY OPIC OF MCMULLEN'S REQUEST FOR POLITICAL RISK INSURANCE.
MURPHY

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